

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6928

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 3744

BEIRUT PASS BAGHDAD AND DAMASCUS

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, IZ

SUBJ: SOVIET VIEWS ON KURDISH PROBLEM AND
IRAQI-IRANIAN FRONTIER CLASHES

REF: MOSCOW 3590

1. SUMMARY. DURING TALK ON ME DEVELOPMENTS WITH
EMBOFF MARCH 16 (OTHER TOPICS SEPTTEL) MFA DEPUTY CHIEF
NEAR EAST COUNTRIES DIVISION PYRLIN DISCUSSED THE
KURDISH PROBLEM AND IRAQI-IRANIAN RELATIONS. PYRLIN
INDICATED FULL SUPPORT FOR IRAQI GOVERNMENT'S KURDISH
POLICH AND SAID SOVIET GOVERNMENT HAS URGED IRAQ AND
IRAN TO SETTLE BORDER DISPUTE PEACEFULLY. END SUMMARY.

2. WHEN EMBOFF ASKED ABOUT SOVIET-IRAQI RELATIONS,
PYRLIN DEFLECTED CONVERSATION TO KURDISH PROBLEM.
HE SAID IRAQI GOVERHMENT HAD RESPONDED POSITIVELY TO
KURDISH STRUGGLE FOR AUTONOMY, BUT KURD POGBLEM WAS
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COMPLICATED. IN TERMS SIMILAR TO HIS APPROACH IN

DISCUSSING PALESTINIAN AFFAIRS, PYRLIN PAINTED KURDS AS LACKING LEADERSHIP AND UNITY. KURDISH DEMOCRATIC PARTY IS DIVIDED. FACTIONS ALL CLAIM TO SPEAK FOR WHOLE OF PARTY. EACH CLAIMS ALSO TO SPEAK IN NAME OF BARZANI WHOM PYRLIN CHARACTERIZED AS AN "OLD MAN."

3. PYRLIN SAID SITUATION IS FURTHER COMPLICATED BY OUTSIDE FORCES. NOTING TURKEY AND IRAN HAVE LARGE KURDISH MINORITIES, HE SAID TURKISH GOVERNMENT, FOR EXAMPLE, HAD RESPONDED TO IRAQI GOVERNMENT'S PROCLAMATION OF KURDISH AUTONOMY BY STRENGTHENING SECURITY ALONG TURKISH-IRAQI BORDER. IRAQI-IRANIAN BORDER CLASHES ALSO CONNECTED WITH KURDISH PROBLEM.

4. LATTER CLASHES, PYRLIN SAID, WERE PROBLEM FOR SOVIETS. SVIET GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH BOTH IRAQ AND IRAN AND WAS PLEASED WITH APPARENT IMPROVEMENT OF IRAQI-IRANIAN RELATIONS OVER LAST SEVERAL MONTHS (E.G. EXCHANGE OF AMBASSADORS BETWEEN TEHRAN AND BAGHDAD). HOWEVER, RECENT BORDER CLASHES INDICATED THAT IMPROVEMENT WAS NOT DEEP. SOVIETS HAVE URGED BOTH PARTIES TO SETTLE ISSUE PEACEFULLY, BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO REAL PROGRESS AND SOVIETS THUS FIND THEMSELVES IN DIFFICULT POSITION.

5. ON SOVIET-IRAQI RELATIONS, PYRLIN CONFIRMED EARLIER REPORT THAT IRAQI PRICE FOR OIL DELIVERED TO SOVIETS IS "ABOUT 12.00 DOLLARS PER BARREL."

6. COMMENT: PYRLIN'S SUPPORT FOR IRAQI GOVERNMENT ON KURDISH ISSUE IS CONSISTENT WITH LINE IN PRESS COMMENT HERE (REFTEL). HOWEVER, HE APPEARED LESS SANGUINE ABOUT RESOLUTION OF GOI-DURDISH DIFFERENCES THAT DID PRAVDA COMMENTARY WHICH FORECAST ACCORD IN NEXT TWO WEEKS. HIS REMARKS ON IRAQI-IRANIAN RELATIONS SUGGEST THAT, WHILE SOVIETS ARE BACKING BAGHDAD ON INTERNAL HANDLING OF KURDISH AFFAIRS AND ACKNOWLEDGING PROBABILITY OF "OUTSIDE" INTERFERENCE IN THE KURDISH QUESTION, CONFIDENTIAL

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THEY ARE NOT EXTENDING THEIR SUPPORT FOR BAGHDAD TO THE IRANIAN FRONTIER PROBLEM.
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